42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

847 as the victim; the first as well as the second may be considered as the
845 unwelcome guest.

The question is to know why the Isneg kill one of twins. This is no easy matter to ascertain. In general, direct inquiries bring no result and throw no light on the subject; most of the time even the practice itself is flatly denied. This happened, among others, in the case of two of my informants who stated that a woman who partook of a double fruit (two bananas in one skin, two betel nuts in one husk, etc.) would give birth to twins, in which they agreed with the Iloko, as has just been explained. Both at first denied that the Isneg ever killed one of twins, and even cited the example of two young men, still alive and actually dwelling at Aligawa. When the Isneg see no way out and realize that you know all about the matter, they usually state that they kill one of twins because they are ashamed, and here they probably tell the truth. One informant told me that they did so lest they should have to feed two children at a time, and another one said that if both children were allowed to live, the whole family would die.

In so far as I know the Isneg, I believe the question of having to feed two children at a time to be a small matter, and in this I see no reason for killing one of twins, at least in every case; besides, this does not explain why an Isneg should feel ashamed at such an occurrence; so the explanation must be sought elsewhere. There is also no connection, even in the eyes of an Isneg, between being ashamed and danger of death; so, even allowing that the fear of dying may be one of the reasons for k lling one of twins, some more plausible reason should be sought after in order to explain the shame conceded by the
[848] generality of Isneg to be connected with the birth of twins. I believe I struck the right answer when one of my informants told me very confidentially that one of the two was considered to be the unlawful offspring of some other man, not the child of its mother's husband. In such a case of course there is every reason for both husband and wife to feel ashamed about the whole affair. But much may be said against this explanation; so now I shall try first to answer all objections, and then to give my own idea about the whole custom and the reason given for the same.

842 It should be stated once for all that there is no question of ascrib-
845 ing one of twins to intercourse of the mother with some spirit or ghost; that any Isneg should entertain such an idea was denied most categorically by all my Isneg informants: both infants are always considered as children of woman by man.

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

But if the Isneg are very willing to rear a child born out of wedlock, and even an adulterous one, which is a fact, why should they be ashamed of rearing one of twins, who also is supposed to belong to the same category, merely because it is one of twins? In our eyes, supposing the explanation to be the right one, which of course it is not, it would be at least as shameful for a mother to give birth to a single adulterous child as to one that is accompanied by another. But the Isneg viewpoint is different.

I shall wave aside the case of a natural child and confine myself to that of an adulterous one. Indeed in the case of a natural child, after the father has paid the penalty, and he always does, the shame resulting from the birth of such a child will have been practically compensated by the anger of the girl's parents and the satisfaction required from the offender; besides, that shame will be comparatively much smaller than that which is connected with the birth of an adulterous child.

In the case of an adulterous child, if the husband knows that his wife has or has had intercourse with another man, and that the infant that will be born from her is not his own, one of two alternatives presents itself: he may either divorce the woman, or else get some other satisfaction and let nature take its course. But here, in both instances, one sees at a glance that all shame that could be connected in the eyes of an Isneg with the birth of an adulterous child has been completely done away with. In the first instance the guilty woman is free, and in the generality of cases she will already be living with some other man; anyhow the child will be her own, and hers exclusively, and the baby will be welcome to all; nobody will talk about it, as the matter was settled long ago, namely at the time of her divorce from her former husband. In the second instance, no shame accrues to either husband or wife, as nobody is supposed to know anything about the matter and the child will pass as the offspring of its mother by her lawful husband; with reference to those who know, satisfaction has been given or forgiveness has been granted.

But the case is quite different when twins are born, always on the supposition, which to the Isneg is nothing less than positive truth, that one of them is really the offspring of some other man. In this case, the mother is still in the eyes of all the world the lawful wife of her husband, she is not free, and there is no question of satisfaction or forgiveness, as nothing has transpired up till now; so she is caught flagrantly and convicted of adultery (always in the eyes of the Isneg)

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

848 as clearly as if somebody had witnessed her having intercourse with
845 her paramour. Hence the shame; and this is, I believe, but natural if considered from the Isneg point of view.

848 But again it might be asked: what is the use of resorting to such
845 a drastic measure, that of killing one of twins? Does the shame
811 not remain the same? Yes and no. She certainly has been caught (I repeat it, always in the eyes of the Isneg), but so far very few people know about it and everybody will keep mum; while, if both children lived, the secret would become public property, and everybody would know about the bad behavior of the mother. Here, however, I am much in doubt if this last answer concurs with the Isneg point of view, and besides, I may urge the matter further and ask: Why is the husband not angry with the real father of the babe? Why does he not divorce his wife? It might be answered that he could not very well know with what man he should be angry, that he might even know very positively that his wife has always been a virtuous woman, and so find no reason for divorcing her. Such answers, however, are evidently very unsatisfactory, and, as I have hinted at in its place, the preceding answer would perhaps never be proffered by an Isneg.

Here then, in my humble opinion, is the core of the whole difficulty, and to me it looks simply like one out of many examples of the reasoning of the Isneg, in which they imitate some Spaniards who are afraid of venturing on a trip on Tuesdays and Fridays (el martes y el viernes ni te cases ni te embarques) and some Americans who nail an old horseshoe to their auto for luck.

Consequently my opinion of the whole matter is this: it is sufficient to have lived with the generality of Christian Iloko for one week at a time, I mean to have lived *with* them, not in their immediate neighhood in your own house, but in their own abode, sleeping on their mat and eating at their table, it is enough, I say, to have lived intimately with them for a comparatively short time to be convinced that nothing will happen which might be regarded as more or less out of the ordinary without an explanation being sought at once, not an explanation that is natural and quite simple, but one that will touch on the preternatural, if not on the supernatural. Anyhow some explanation will be looked for, and this will rarely or never be the ordinary one, which truly and simply fits the known facts, since it would surely be considered as far from satisfactory, on account of its being quite natural, while the event is supposed to be unnatural. If a leaf moves, an insect hums, a bird flies, etc., and such an occurrence

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

is not exactly what is quite ordinary, immediately all sorts of questions are asked: Why? What is the matter? What is the meaning? What might it portend? What secret is hidden behind it? And so on.

Now the pagan Isneg are no better. They also will try to find some explanation different from the natural one for any event that does not look entirely ordinary to them. And so the birth of twins being a rather rare occurrence, there must be something the matter with it. Twins. Who ever heard of two children being born at once from one husband and one wife, without there being a secret behind the whole affair? Twins: this is far from common. And there you are; an explanation has to be found. Now there is one ready at hand, and to the Isneg mind a very reasonable one, it is not even necessary to enter into the realm of spirits: two children at once must be the product of two men; when one man who lives in bigamy begets two children simultaneously from two women, there are at least three authors, so now also these twins must be the offspring of three persons, —in this case of only one woman of course, and thus necessarily of two men.

Now what to do? Just kill one of them, put it out of the way, and so avoid the shame attached to the whole affair; kill all gossip in the bud. But is every child not welcome? Certainly it is, but a child has no business bringing a companion with it, and the joy of the parents will be complete with the single child; the other one, if alive, will not add to that joy, nor, if dead, detract from it. Here of course the husband is faced with a dilemma: either his wife is a virtuous woman or she is not; if she is, and maybe he knows her to be so, then how can she have a child by another man? If she is not, why does he not divorce her? Yes, but this dilemma does not confront the Isneg, his reasoning does not extend as far as that. If he knew his wife to have been unfaithful, that would be reason enough for him to divorce her without needing the birth of twins to convince him. Here he stands before an extraordinary event, the birth of twins; he has found an explanation for it: the action of a third person. This is a very shameful affair to both husband and wife, but he will eliminate all difficulties at once: one of the twins will be done away with. And there his reasoning stops, the incident is closed.

Here follow a few Isneg expressions with reference to little children:

Babbíń or *ababbíń*, when used by the parents: son, daughter, child.

Ababbíń, when used by the parents: sons, daughters, children.

Ababbíń, when used by other persons: little children not yet able or barely able to walk.

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

183 vogue here now tends to retard marriage; but its introduction is still
178 too recent and it is still too much the privilege of the few, to be able
177 sensibly to affect the standard of morality among our Isneg.

As to conjugal fidelity, it may be said that an unfaithful wife is
837 the exception among the Isneg; but with reference to the men, the
183 situation is not so bright. Even polygyny is not always sufficient
184 to put a curb to the husband's license: indeed only the rich can afford to take more than one wife, and these at the same time usually enjoy the greatest freedom on account of their wealth and social influence.

577 To sum up the situation, it may be said that open immorality and
183 indecency is much less frequent among the Isneg than among several other Mountain tribes, but, although more or less well concealed, loose
171 morals are rather the rule than the exception among young unmarried
836 people, and among married people the state of affairs leaves much to be desired. "Doing that which may make a girl pregnant" is not what the Isneg abhors, but "making a girl actually pregnant".

577 With reference to honesty, the Isneg generally observes the rules
183 laid down by his own code, and transgressions are rare. Isneg thieves
685 are not at all common, and downright robbery, even from the Ibanag or the *idammán* (enemies of his own tribe), is a rare occurrence. This
858 is true of children as well as of adults, although the former may
867 occasionally try to pilfer fruits or other eatables, in which, nevertheless, they are never encouraged by their elders, who rarely fail to scold them and even to punish them.

577 Truthfulness also is quite ordinary among adult Isneg, but many
867 youngsters need frequent correction on the subject. In this connec-
158 tion, however, we should bear in mind the existence of two inveterate habits not only among the Isneg, but also among the generality of
183 Malays with whom I have come in contact. And first, whenever he is caught at something that might elicit from you even the smallest
811 reprimand, he has always an excuse ready at the tip of his tongue, and any excuse will do, however preposterous it may be; he never reasons about it, the truth is not what he aims at, but the plain presentation of an excuse, be it real or imaginary. These people are certainly experts in that line.

577 Just to give a few examples. One day I was very much astonished
158 to find that all my bananas had disappeared, although they were carefully stored away in a closed press, so I suspected, and not without
183 reason, that one of my Isneg boys had found them to his taste. At the first occasion I bluntly asked the fellow what had happened to
811